

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A-8

WASHINGTON STAR (GREEN LINE)
23 JULY 1981

White House Denies Plan To Oust Kadafi

By Henry S. Bradsher
Washington Star Staff Writer

A White House spokesman yesterday denied a report that the CIA proposed to overthrow Libyan leader Muammar Kadafi, while other officials expressed concern that secret information given to the House Intelligence Committee had leaked out — even if in an incorrect version.

A Newsweek magazine report Sunday said CIA Director William J. Casey had approved a plan to overthrow Kadafi. But when the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence was briefed in secrecy on the plan, the report said, it was so concerned that it wrote to President Reagan to warn against the plan.

This followed earlier reports in other publications saying that senior officials, including Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig Jr., had approved a plan to encourage or even help several African and Middle Eastern countries to oust Kadafi. The Libyan strongman has been regarded here as a supporter of terrorism and an aggressor against neighboring countries.

Libya recently accused Egypt of plotting to overthrow its government. The Egyptian government dismissed the accusation as a result of heat-stroke.

Deputy presidential press secretary Larry Speakes confirmed that Reagan had received a letter from the House committee, but it "does not concern Libya or Kadafi." He added, "The Newsweek story is incorrect."

Fending off further questions, Speakes said, "We don't go into the business of discussing CIA operations. . . . We do not condone or support the assassination of foreign leaders or the overthrow of foreign governments by the United States."

Newsweek said Max C. Hugel briefed the House committee on a plan to embarrass Kadafi with "disinformation," create an alternative government for Libya, and then mount a paramilitary operation to overthrow him. Speakes denied that such a briefing had ever taken place.

At the time of the alleged briefing, Hugel was the CIA deputy director for operations, the post that controls clandestine operations. Hugel, a political aide of Casey's who was appointed to the sensitive job without any experience, resigned two weeks ago under White House pressure following accusations against him of stock market manipulation. He denied the accusations.

Both in the administration and on Capitol Hill, the apparent leakage of some kind of information about plans for a CIA covert operation disturbed a number of officials. By saying that Reagan had received a letter from the House intelligence committee, Speakes apparently confirmed that the committee had in fact been briefed on some proposed clandestine action against a foreign government, even if not Kadafi's.

The leakage raised questions about the ability of the House committee, and indirectly also the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, to keep the most sensitive kinds of government secrets, some officials said.